

**HONORABLE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
CINCINNATI, OHIO**

September 1, 2006

SUBJECT

A report and recommendation on proposed amendments to Planned Development District No. 39 Final Development Plan located at 3301 Colerain Avenue in the neighborhood of Camp Washington.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Owner: Middle Earth Developers
P.O. Box 14823
Cincinnati, Ohio 45250

BACKGROUND

On December 1, 2004 City Council passed Ordinance No. 377-2004 notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 1413, Manufacturing Districts, of the Cincinnati Zoning Code. This action permitted the property owner, Middle Earth Developers, to begin development of 3301 Colerain Avenue into a mixed-use project comprised of residential apartments and light industrial uses. Building permits were issued on February 15, 2005 for the building renovation.

Subsequently, on February 24, 2005, City Council passed Ordinance No. 72-2005 creating Planned Development District No. 39 to permit residential, light industrial and office uses. The planned development of the property will result in 46,120 square feet of commercial space, 60 market-rate residential dwelling units and a 48 parking space garage, in a 64,000 square foot structure. There will be 72 surface parking spaces located in a courtyard area.

The renovation of property has been completed for the 60 market-rate residential dwelling units with parking and 40 units are occupied. The light manufacturing and office space has been partially prepared for reuse. The property has been named the Machine Flats Apartments.

REQUEST

The owner of the property and Muller Architects have requested that Cultural Institution use be added to the permitted uses for Planned Development District No.39.

The American Sign Museum is planning to relocate from its current facility at the Essex in Walnut Hills at 490 E. McMillan Street to the Planned Development District No. 39 at 3301 Colerain Avenue. The museum is a not-for-profit corporation that was founded in 1999 as the National Signs of the Times Museum. The American Sign Museum is considered a Cultural Institution use as defined by the Cincinnati Zoning Code Section 1401-01-C22.

The American Sign Museum will be located in a one-story warehouse section of this mixed-use property with primary frontage along Monmouth Street west of Colerain Avenue. The museum will have exhibits set up for both guided and self-guided tours within a 21,000 square

foot area showcasing a number of period signs. The museum will have its own in-house service shop for receiving, cleaning and basic electrical repair of signs prior to being displayed.

The proposed museum will be open limited hours on weekends and by appointment.

A portion of the museum space will be subleased to a separate neon sign shop that will create of new signs and restore existing signs as an independent business (light manufacturing use). The neon sign shop will occupy approximately 1,600 square feet and have its own entry, bathrooms and office.

A wall sign identifying the American Sign Museum is to be affixed to the brick of the existing elevator shaft tower that extends above the building. Indirect lighting would be used to illuminate the sign during the evening hours.

FINDINGS

Since 2004, the existing four-story building section has been renovated into 60 apartments of which 40 apartments are occupied. Office and light manufacturing space located along the Monmouth Avenue frontage has been partially renovated in anticipation of tenants. The proposed American Sign Museum relocation to 3301 Colerain Avenue would occupy space otherwise assigned to light manufacturing or warehousing use. The museum will be a more compatible use with the adjacent residential apartments.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

- The Community Council supports the project.
- The Camp Washington Business Association supports the project.

ZONING CODE REVIEW

The property is zoned Planned Development (PD) District No. 39 for the purpose of permitting a mixed use development consisting of residential, light manufacturing and office use in a former manufacturing facility. According to Section 1425-19-A, Off-Street Parking and Loading Requirements, a Cultural Institution use requires one parking space for every 500 square feet of floor area. The museum will occupy 21,000 square feet and is required to have 42 parking spaces and one loading dock. The neon sign shop is required to have one parking space and no loading dock is required. The property owner has agreed to provide 44 parking spaces for the museum and neon sign shop use.

Section 1429-21 Final Development Plan Amendments are categorized as either minor or major. Minor amendments are field condition, engineering data, topography or design related. Only the City Planning Commission may approve major amendments, provided that the City Planning Commission determines that such adjustments do not substantially alter the concept or intent of the approved final development plan.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The planned relocation of the American Sign Museum as a Cultural Institution at 3301 Colerain Avenue will continue the mixed-use project theme as originally intended for PD No. 39 consisting of residential, light manufacturing and office use.
2. The museum will be a compatible use with the adjacent residential apartments.
3. The Camp Washington Community Council and Business Association support the zone change request.

RECOMMENDATION

The staff of the Department of Community Development and Planning recommends that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

Approve the American Sign Museum as a Cultural Institution use in the Final Development Plan for Planned Development District No.39 located at 3301 Colerain Avenue.

Respectfully Submitted:

Stephen C. Briggs
Senior City Planner

Approved:

Margaret A. Wuerstle, AICP
Chief Planner